

CPRL Program Description

The Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) is a partnership of top US professional schools that prepares a diverse pool of business, data sciences, education, law, and policy students with the knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to lead transformative change in public service-delivery organizations. CPRL's integrated program of conceptual, skills, and experiential learning focuses in particular on how public school systems learn and change in order to improve outcomes for all children—particularly those of color, from low-income households, or otherwise traditionally underserved.

CPRL's interdisciplinary program combines a research and consulting project, a seminar on the theory and practice of structural and institutional design and change, professional skills development, and career and networking support. Research and consulting projects serve school districts, education departments, advocacy organizations, non-profits, and foundations, empowering a broad network of elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educators, leaders, and stakeholders with ideas, tools, and practices that support transformative change through accelerated learning from their own efforts and experience.

Through their participation in CPRL, students have the opportunity to work with a cohort of talented and committed upper-level graduate students from Columbia, Dartmouth, Fordham, NYU, Princeton, Stanford, Vanderbilt, Yale, and the Universities of California (Berkeley), Michigan, and Minnesota, among others. Two-thirds of CPRL's over 500 alums have entered public service at some point after graduating.

CPRL's full-time intensive seminar and practicum (available in fall and spring semesters), hosted at Columbia Law School, is comprised of three components:

- (i) **A comprehensive seminar** in the design, governance, regulation, democratic accountability, and systematic transformation of public- and allied social- sector organizations with a focus on PK-12 school systems.
- (ii) **Skills training** in a range of twenty-first century problem-solving competencies, including working in diverse teams to address multi-dimensional problems; design and systems thinking; collaborative inquiry; quantitative and qualitative analysis and measurement; organizational macro- and micro-design; project and product management; client-centered and policy-focused information gathering; and the presentation of professional advice to government and social-sector clients.
- (iii) **A high-priority, professionally guided research or consulting project** on which an interdisciplinary team of graduate students provides research, design, strategic planning, and/or

implementation support on matters that combine legal, management, policy, governance, regulatory, and/or technological issues crucial to the mission of the client organization.

The seminar and skills components of the program are front-loaded in the semester to prepare students and give them, their teams, and their CPRL team leaders ample time to conduct client-focused project work interacting directly with clients throughout the U.S. and Brazil. Team assignments are based on student preferences and skills as well as client needs. CPRL covers expenses when projects involve site visits and travel.

The course is taught by an accomplished team of professionals, including Columbia Law Professor and former senior official at the New York City Department of Education Jim Liebman, CPRL's Executive Director Dr. Elizabeth Chu, CPRL's Deputy Director of Quality & Improvement Dr. Kimberly Austin, and professional educators and practitioners across the CPRL network. Research and consulting projects are guided by a team of 10 experienced directors employed full-time by CPRL who bring extensive experience in PK-12 education, law, management consulting, and other professional endeavors. These managers assure that the project work is both challenging and achievable by the student teams, providing students with intensive team and one-on-one feedback and personalized professional development and mentorship.

CPRL applicants are asked to submit a resume, transcript, and written responses to two application prompts via CPRL's online application located on [CPRL's website](#).

A limited number of scholarships are available for exceptional students to apply to their semester's tuition in return for a legally enforceable commitment to work full time for three of their first five years after graduation in a public or nonprofit job supporting the PK-12 public education sector. Students may apply for up to \$20,000 in CPRL Scholar Award funding in exchange for this commitment in any country, or they may apply for up to \$30,000 in scholarship from the Lemann Foundation in exchange for this commitment in Brazil. Both awards are distributed based on need and merit. As awards of last resort, they take into consideration any other educational aid that students have been (or will be) awarded. Applicants who would like to be considered for either of these CPRL Scholar Awards should submit the short optional tuition award application also found on CPRL's website.

After initial review of application materials, CPRL will interview applicants by invitation. Students will be notified of admissions decisions in accordance with their own school's registration deadline. If you have any questions about the course or would like to be connected to current students or alumni, please send your request to cpri@law.columbia.edu.